

Hotel offers players home away from home

By JIM JUDD
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Life on the road for any athlete can be downright miserable and the worst aspects are often amplified for players on junior hockey teams — long bus trips, hotel rooms, homesickness, bland and often uninspired meals.

A Vernon hotel manager has been doing his best to provide a little of the comforts of home to travelling teams and in doing so has virtually cornered the market among junior hockey clubs on the road in the B.C. Interior.

Cal Scouten, manager of the Sandman Inn, houses every junior hockey team in the Western Hockey League as well as most of the teams with the B.C. Junior Hockey League and dozens of others representing different leagues and calibre of play throughout the province, and even the world.

At any time, you can expect to find upwards of three teams occupying the Vernon hotel. It's by no accident that the teams chose the Vernon hotel over hundreds of others in the area ... reasonable rates, excellent service, and attention to other finer details have made Sandman, in Vernon, the unanimous choice by these teams.

"Teams that come in asked if I could set up practice times for them as well," said Scouten, whose genuine personal interest in amateur sport keeps him enthusiastic about his company at the local establishment. "I couldn't get anything in Vernon but I set up ice time in Armstrong and Winfield."

The result of Scouten's efforts means youngsters in those areas can have the opportunity of at least watching junior hockey teams practice, even if they never have a chance to see them in a game situation.

Though Scouten offers team rates that fall far short of his competitors, he explained that the teams utilize his facilities for a number of other reasons.

"They (management of teams) said the price is secondary to service because each kid has certain needs that we seem to cater to ... for instance the kids never leave the table hungry.

Also, a lot of them get homesick because they are so young. We try to create a homestyle atmosphere for them."

In complying with this philosophy, Scouten sees to it that each team coming through the door is met with a huge chocolate cake, complete with icing decorations in their own team logo. He says the kids love it and it gives them something to look forward to the next time they pass through.

In return, the youngsters guard their sacred overnight domain with generous helpings of good manners and good behaviour.

"The waitresses can tell you they've been very polite ... well dressed and really young gentlemen," explained Scouten. "None of them smoke, they don't drink and they're really quiet."

In return, the players can enjoy the fringe benefits the hotel has to offer such as the indoor pool.

One of the other reasons teams prefer the serene Vernon atmosphere afforded by the local hotel is the benevolence of the area.

"It's a safe place to let the youngsters roam around in," said Scouten. "Coaches can feel secure



CAL SCOUTEN
... junior hockey fan

in letting them roam here."

Meanwhile, Scouten and his hotel realize very little profit from the venture though there are other aspects of the business that it does feed.

"We're not making much money off the project but it keeps our staff working," explained Scouten. "The tourist trade stops at the end of summer and hockey season begins so we're taking advantage of that."

However, the teams do unload a supply of cash on other areas of the city and for that they can thank Scouten and his company.

"Buses gas up at Vernon stations," said Scouten. "Maybe some repairs are done from time to time and the youngsters shop around town too."

In addition to the lengthy list of junior hockey teams which make the Sandman Inn their temporary home away from home, Scouten will entertain a number of other teams this winter including the Swedish national Team, which has booked the hotel for three nights. Intermediate clubs competing in the Vernon Cougars' Tournament, in November, are booked in and in the past teams such as Minnesota Junior Vulcans also hung their hats for a few nights.

In addition to the service they offer the teams in the way of comforts, Scouten is also dabbling in other areas. For instance, his hotel is the only local outlet for Kelowna Wings' tickets.

In summing up his services Scouten, concludes on a philosophical note.

"Hockey is our national sport," said Scouten. "This is a Canadian chain of hotels."

Difficult shot gives Laface win

Wayne Laface (Waddy's Restaurant) edged Rob Litster (Fairglass Doors) 10-9 in Wawanesa Inter-city Curling League action, Wednesday night, in Vernon.

Litster counted three in the ninth end to take a 9-8 lead. However, Laface executed a difficult double-takeout, in the 10th, to count two.

In other games, Wally Tutkaluk (Ben's Meat market) nipped Herb Van Grootel (national Hotel) 9-8, Dave Simpson (Baron Insurance) downed Mark Longworth (Hong Kong Village) 9-7, and Randy Brown (M and K Ready Mix) blasted Blake Kimura (Empire Meats) 9-2 in eight ends.

In Kelowna, Doug Hanan stole two in the 10th and one in the 11th to

open takeouts in the second end to fall behind 3-0. He fought back to within one and forced Simpson to make a delicate tap-back, facing two of Longworth's rocks buried behind two guards, in the 10th.

Brown had complete

control of his match with Kimura. He put the score out of reach by counting one in the fifth end and stealing three in the sixth.

Tutkaluk counted four in the fifth end, but needed one in the 10th to down Van Grootel.

Baryla steals curling victory

Paul Baryla (Sigalet Bros. Auto) stole one in the 10th end to defeat Jim Fuhr (Golden Crown Restaurant) 8-7 in Vernon Super Curling League action, Wednesday night.

Fuhr led 7-5 before Baryla tied the game in the ninth end and stole the 10th. Baryla froze to the button, on Fuhr's rock, on his final shot.

In other games, Dick Latta (Maun Life) nipped